

Finance Committee Meeting
April 4, 2006
4:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bob Sampson, Chair
Dave Drobisch
Jay Dunn
Merv Jacobs
Bill Oliver
John Snyder

MEMBERS ABSENT

Phil Hogan

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Amy Stockwell, Auditor
Carol Reed, Deputy Auditor
Jon Baxter, Public Defender
Michael Day, Coroner
Sheriff Jerry Dawson
Judge John Greanias
Daysa Miller, Sup. of Assessments
Jerry Andrews, Health Administrator
Kathy Hott, Circuit Clerk
Lori Long, Probation
Ken Boles, Asst. State's Attorney

This meeting was called to order by Chair Sampson at the Macon County Office Building.

MINUTES

Motion made by Dave Drobisch to approve the minutes of February 28, 2006, seconded by Bill Oliver, and motion carried unanimously.

CLAIMS

Motion made by Dave Drobisch to approve the claims, seconded by Jay Dunn, and motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Judge John Greanias

Judge Greanias distributed a memo from Melenie Milliman regarding T1 Overload showing current costs, additional T1 line costs, and additional hardware/support costs. This was discussed previously in the Justice Committee meeting on 3-30-06. Costs currently paid by the Decatur Public Building Commission and additional T1 line costs to be paid by the Decatur Public Building Commission were included. The county has basically filled up their access paths in and out of routers and a second line is needed. Since all county offices are affected, the cost could be shared by all offices and a good part of it by the public building commission.

Since it is for the common good of all county officeholders, Judge Greanias assumes a board resolution is needed. He does not know if it is a memo of understanding with Richland and a purchase from AT&T, and he asked the auditor if board action is needed to purchase the second T1 line. Amy Stockwell said if all the officeholders agree, it could be covered out of their budgets; adding it up looks like it could be split evenly again for around \$350 per office. If all officeholders agree, Amy said it could come out of currently appropriated funds and since there is a contract in place, it would be an addendum to that. Judge Greanias said he feels this needs to be accomplished as soon as possible for the good of everyone. Chair Sampson said a motion is needed authorizing the building commission to pursue this agreement and then determine how the costs are going to be divided at a later point. Judge Greanias said there would also be the initial one-time equipment cost in addition to the \$350 annual technical services fee, and that we are doubling what we already have. Motion made by Bill Oliver to authorize the addition of the second T1 line and the division of the cost among the offices which use the service, and seconded by Dave Drobisch. Jay Dunn said he assumed we are paying \$350 now supporting the equipment we have which goes along with our current T1. Judge Greanias said he knew nothing about the figures until his technology person told him that our highway was blocked and a second line was needed. Jay Dunn said if we could check into it with us paying \$350 for one unit and putting in the same unit next to it for \$350, we may be able to get some help. Sheriff Dawson said Frank Miller had investigated the sheriff's office getting their own line independent of this and it was a lot more expensive, so this is cost effective. Motion carried unanimously.

Judge Greanias said the local Crime Stoppers organization contacted him about administratively imposing fees for those who are serving criminal sentences or supervision to raise money for their organization which gives rewards for anonymous calls. Law enforcement feels it is very beneficial, and there is a state law which allows the court to impose it administratively which Judge Greanias intends to do. It will be \$10 in all felony cases, \$5 in misdemeanor cases, and \$5 in traffic cases punishable as Class A misdemeanor; Crime Stoppers looked at the numbers and thinks it may raise \$15,000 a year for them. The money will be collected by the clerk and turned over to Crime Stoppers. In response to a question from Bill Oliver, Sheriff Dawson said they pay a reward for information for any crime in Macon County whether county or city.

Judge Greanias said they have completed installation of the Jury Management System which replaced the system they had; the cost was \$37,000, half will be paid this year and half next year. He anticipates this will take the sheriff completely out of the business of serving summons and hunting people down, and will let them use jurors more efficiently.

As reported previously, a contract has been entered into with R. K. Dixon, technical consultants, to review the court automation system. This is done periodically to update systems and make sure they are operating properly. Cost was \$9500 and Judge Greanias said he has the money to pay for it this year, but it is an ongoing project.

The electronic filing process is now beginning and the circuit clerk is attending a meeting in Chicago sponsored by the Administrative Office of IL Courts. A request for a pilot project has been on file for some time. In federal courts, you no longer go to the clerk's office to file anything since it is all done electronically. It takes additional equipment, software, and training for staff. This is the next big burden which will be imposed on the courts.

The court automation fund is how most of the automation services are paid which the court and clerk use. Judge Greanias said he has discussed this subject before, and distributed a sheet showing the effect of a \$5 increase. The current \$5 fee has been in place for at least 10 years and it raises \$100,000 for the court automation fund. Everyone who comes to court and files a case or pays a fine pays \$5 right now. The legislature last year allowed it to be raised up to \$15, but \$15 is not required at this time; \$5 is needed to fund technology for the courts and the circuit clerk. Whenever the fee is raised, there is a diversion from other funds. For every 20,000 who pay the current \$5 fee, \$100,000 is raised which will double if the board approves an additional \$5 increase for a total of \$10. Of the 20,000 who give \$5 each, 9200 actually have to go to court and there is no limit on their fines or fees since the \$5 is added on top. Judge Greanias said they receive \$5 new from 9200 people or \$46,000. Of the 20,000 who come in giving the \$5, 10,800 simply pay traffic tickets over the counter and this is a fixed sum of money which they pay depending on the type of offense; the \$5 is not added on but comes out first to go into the automation fund. What is left of this goes to three different agencies including the county general fund, the agency issuing the traffic citation, and the state. Again, with 10,800 people a year coming in to pay traffic tickets over the counter generates \$54,000. If the fee is raised by \$5 the \$54,000, instead of going to the three agencies, would go into the automation fund. The sheet shows who is contributing by the diversion of the money, county general fund \$20,885, agency issuing traffic citation \$24,030, and state \$9085; this money would be diverted to the automation fund. The numbers are happening now with the current \$5 fee and it would double with a \$10 fee. The increase is needed since more money is being spent for automation now than what is brought in. The reserve built up over the past year will not last very long; of the \$100,000 the first \$60,000 goes to pay the court automation technology person who works for the court and circuit clerk. Last year for routine purchases of hardware and software, Judge Greanias said \$45,500 was spent. Another fund, the data processing fund, has money of which some is used for automation also. The last time the big mainframe computer was purchased three years ago, the cost was \$125,000 and it has been replaced in the past every 3 to 5 years. The legislature realizes this is a good way to finance technology expense and that is why they passed the law allowing the fee to be raised. Judge Greanias is asking that a resolution be adopted increasing the court automation fee to \$10 effective July 1. In response to a question from Merv Jacobs, Judge Greanias said again with the current \$5 fee, the \$20,885 does not go into the county general fund but goes into the court automation fund. If it is not paid to the automation fund, the clerk and the court will have to add it onto their budget which will be asking for more money out of the general corporate fund; Judge Greanias said the advantage to this is other agencies contribute.

Jay Dunn asked who the technology person is that the county is paying \$60,000 for; Judge Greanias said Melenie Milliman and the county pays more than \$60,000 since the rest is paid out of his budget. He feels she is more important to the county than he is, and she has worked with this system for years. Jay Dunn asked where the mainframe is purchased at, and Judge Greanias said IBM. Bill Oliver asked what the negative results would be for the county; Judge Greanias said general fund receipts would go down approximately \$20,000 and the court automation fund will go up around \$100,000. Jay Dunn said it was his understanding this is not to pay for any more salaries; Judge Greanias said he will not be paying any more salaries and Kathy told him she does not plan to pay any more salaries and if they find they need to, they will come back to the committee for consent. Judge Greanias said he thinks the court technology person's current salary is around \$70,000 to \$72,000. Motion made by Jay Dunn to increase the court automation fund by \$5 effective July 1 and seconded by Dave Drobisch. Amy Stockwell said this would be fund 50 and like all funds is a county fund so it is taxpayer money which is being administered and controlled in fund 50 for the purpose of court automation. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer

Steve Grimm said mobile home tax bills were mailed March 15 with a due date of May 15; mobile home tax payments are part of the total tax collection picture. A total of \$88,531.15 was collected in 2005. A first time mobile home tax sale was held February 15 and no buyers showed up. With the arrangement with the Macon County Trustee, 274 parcels went to them. The real estate tax collection cycle is 100% ready after the county clerk finishes tax extension. Steve said he hopes real estate tax bills will be mailed by May 15 with a June 15 first due date and September 1 the second. The first disbursement should take place the end of July as anticipated.

A deposit box was installed on the north side of the building, and a meaningful news release is being worked on for the taxpayers. WAND has already responded, and Steve said he would be working with other media to get the word out. If taxpayers can be convinced to use the box, long lines will be reduced.

Steve said he has a new sheet which tracks the general fund daily and also from one year ago for comparison purposes. On 3-30-06, the general fund balance was \$1,569,363.05 compared to \$770,238.01 a year ago. The annual collector report was put in county board boxes last week. Today's balance is \$1,268,240.86 compared with \$633,938.45 a year ago, and repayment of the old debt is still being targeted.

Auditor

Amy Stockwell said she had a lengthy stack of dues for approval; Chair Sampson asked Ken Boles if the committee could take action since they are not on the agenda. Ken Boles advised no, so they will be held over until the next meeting.

Amy said she gave a letter on IMRF performance a couple of weeks ago. It was a good year and IMRF had a good year in terms of their investment performance. What was earned on investments in the regular IMRF account was almost 2.3 million dollars which far exceeded what we contributed as a county, \$700,000. The whole thing about a retirement plan is having those monies in the bank to earn interest. The meeting with IMRF will be in the next couple of weeks where they will let us know what it means in terms of our contribution going forward.

Amy said they are continuing to work on the audit and are ahead of where we were this time last year; they have researched and made a couple policy changes which will be available in the document. A number of entries were made in 97 and 2000 on the relation between the insurance fund and self-insurance fund; an agreement has been reached with the auditors that they can be eliminated which will keep the fund balance for those two combined funds in the insurance fund which should allow a further reduction in the insurance fund levy next year.

There were two funds where property taxes were collected, but with the signing of the new lease with the building commission, there is one fund and with the role of the city, the building commission will not be included in the county's financial statements since it does not correctly address operations of the combined unit. The new report will include the building commission as a component unit of Macon County Government. Financial operations are much more stable than they have been so the trends seen last fall are continuing through the closing of the audit process. Amy said they have just started working on the March report, but she reported at the end of February report that we are where we should be on a year to date basis, 25% of the year and 25% on revenue with expenditures running slightly below at 20%. Taking a preliminary look at March, revenue was around 34% and salaries are on target at 31-33%; the full March report will be available at next month's meeting.

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Dawson said the jail population is consistently staying around 300, and most of them need to be there even though at one time it was thought we might be able to get creative with 10 – 15% such as home monitoring, etc.; he does not feel that is going to happen. Even with the renovation scheduled for completion in the fall, the population will be way over. Solutions need to be addressed since we have tried to do it without adding more space and it is not going to happen. Sheriff Dawson feels the county needs to be prepared to maybe start looking at an annex since a facility designed for 200 people does not work with 300 inmates.

Coroner

Mike Day requested approval of the coroner/medical examiner association dues of \$350 for this year since it is a useful tool for training purposes and networking. Chair Sampson said under the Open Meeting Act, this cannot be acted on since it is not on the agenda for tonight; it can be put on the agenda for next month's meeting.

Items requiring action must be on the agenda before the committee can legally act on them. Chair Sampson will get another memo out to officeholders and department heads on this subject as a reminder.

OLD BUSINESS

Chair Sampson distributed a draft Proposal for Salaries of Officeholders Elected in 2006 which is an effort to put a ball in the air since he does not expect a vote tonight. A decision will need to be made by the end of May, so this discussion could be held at next month's meeting or a special meeting. The basic idea was the off-year elected officeholders have not had an increase since 1998.

The presidential year officeholders received an increase in 2000; the county was in financial crisis at the time but some knew about it and others did not, so they got one. By the time the 98 people came around, the county was in full-blown crisis so they did not get one.

One approach would be to try and redress this so the off-year people would be brought up to the presidential year people, and then give them a 3% annual increase as was done with the AFSCME employees for the remainder of the three years. Another issue is whether to combine the two salaries of the sheriff, public safety director portion and sheriff's portion; Chair Sampson said at one point he had personally favored combining them, but if it is felt the sheriff should always make more than the command officers due to contracts, that may not be possible unless the public safety director portion is retained since that allows the board if it so chooses to increase the sheriff's salary during the term. After researching state stipends, Chair Sampson said all officeholders with the exception of the auditor receive a \$6500 stipend from the state in addition to their salaries; however, the state may say at some point they are not going to pay them anymore so the focus needs to be on what we pay. Whoever sets the salaries for the presidential year people in the future will perhaps rectify the inequity of the auditor's salary being actually \$6500 less than everyone else. Apparently at some point in the early 90's, the board decided all officeholders should be paid the same since there was a great variance prior and this has been pretty much eliminated in the last decade.

Dave Drobisch said he feels it is time to take a serious look at increasing those three in the off-year group, and he said he is in favor of giving some sort of an increase, but he is not sure if the 3% increase in subsequent years is legal. He feels an opinion is needed first from the state's attorney since he recalls from years ago an attorney general's opinion which said a fixed amount had to be set over the term until the next election. Chair Sampson said the last two resolutions he looked at were set so it increased every year during the term except those years it was frozen; however, it probably should be looked into first. Dave Drobisch requested that the state's attorney research this before the next Finance meeting. Chair Sampson asked Ken Boles to forward the request to the proper person for a response by the next Finance meeting on May 2 so a recommendation can be forwarded to the board at their May 11 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Merv Jacobs asked about the document or letter from the board chairman regarding making a pledge on the tax levy which was in board member mailboxes; he asked if it came from the finance department or board, and Chair Sampson said it came from the board chairman. Merv commented that he would not sign it since he made a pledge 20 years ago when he first ran for county board to do what he is now asking; Merv said he is making the same pledge to his voters this time. Merv does not feel he needs to make a pledge to David Wolfe, Chairman of the Board, that he will follow him since that is dangerous and he does not intend to do it. Merv said he talked to the auditor and he is not saying anything he has not said to her, but he has been on the board long enough to go through the problems with anticipated funds; making a decision now to sign a pledge based on anticipated funds is ridiculous and to him it is elementary management for the county board. Merv said he believes the numbers in the funds, but he also believed them several years ago which led to the county having the deficit which we have now. For the county board to sign it for anticipated funds, Merv feels it is a gross mistake.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2006, at 4:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Merv Jacobs to adjourn, seconded by Dave Drobisch, and motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Linda Koger
Macon County Board Office